

Session 12 - A Biblical and Scientific View on Gender/homosexuality

12/7/18

- Many Christians don't know what to think...or may be afraid the Bible got it wrong on this topic.
- This issue is unique in a few different ways. One of them is how the views within America and around the world have changed in a relatively short amount of time.
- As we've all experienced, the acceptance of homosexuality and non-biblical views on sexuality have skyrocketed in the last couple decades.

6 Things to Know From the Start

- The Bible (and Jesus himself) did condemn homosexuality
 - Most of the points we'll be making come from a **scientific, philosophical, psychological, and sociological** perspective and are backed up by **research**, but they are in line with biblical teaching and we want to point out some of the key biblical verses that address homosexuality and marriage in the first place.
 - **Gen 19:1-11** Sodomy
 - **Lev 18:22** Prohibits all forbidden and unnatural sexual relationships.
 - **Lev 20:13** Restates 18:22 and adds the death penalty for the practice.
 - **Rom 1:26-27** "...women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman..."
 - **1 Cor 6:9-11** "Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men..."(NIV)
 - **Matthew 19:4** "at the beginning the Creator made them male and female"
 - **Mark 10** "a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife"
- Same Sex Attraction is not a Sin
 - Temptation is different from sin. We've all had sexual temptations that were distortions of God's desire for us.
 - Jesus was tempted, but did not sin (Heb. 4:15).
 - From a biblical perspective, In the same way that an unmarried heterosexual would be expected to refrain from acting on sexual desires, a person with same-sex desire is commanded to as well. Sexual attraction does not have to be acted on, and if we're not married, it shouldn't be acted on regardless of desire. 1 Cor. 10:13 promises that God will give us a way out from that temptation.
- A person is more than their sexuality
 - Sometimes we can get the sense that someone's sexual attraction is the biggest factor in who they are. To identify by our sexual attractions is to diminish

several more important factors about who we are as well as diminishing what our physical body says about who we are.

- All humans are simultaneously sinful and loved (by God and by loving Christians)
 - This is true for you, me, and any homosexual (or liar or murder for that matter). Hopefully this realization will even the playing field a little bit in our mind and make it easier to see someone struggling with sexuality as a peer.
- The percentage of the population that identifies as exclusively homosexual is lower than you might think.
 - A study done by Alfred Kinsey in 1948 purported the percentage of males that were “more or less exclusively homosexual” in the general population to be 10%. It was incorrect.
 - Several later studies have shown that, in reality, the percentage is approximately 2-3%.
- Same gender sexual relationships are not satisfying in the long term.
 - Studies have shown that people who are happiest sexually are actually married, conservative Christians.¹

Some Terminology

Gender Dysphoria - The condition of feeling one's emotional and psychological identity as male or female to be opposite to one's biological sex. Sometimes called gender confusion.

Gender Identity - A person's sense of their own gender. Non-physical component of our identity. Primarily subconscious. Our progressive, liberal friends at Wikipedia say: *All societies have a set of gender categories that can serve as the basis of the formation of a person's social identity in relation to other members of society.*

Intersex - A person born with physical(1 in 2000) or hormonal characteristics that do not fit the typical definitions for male or female bodies. This is a very small portion of all babies born. In these rare cases the genitalia often appear deformed or ambiguous. Those that want to confuse gender issues will point to the cases of intersex individuals to try to distract from the fact that the vast majority have a very clear gender.

Transgender/transsexual - A person whose sense of personal identity and gender does not correspond with their clear physical gender assigned at birth. A transsexual person has acted on this feeling through hormone therapy and/or gender reassignment surgery.

¹ Slattery and Gresh, *Pulling Back the Shades*, 99-100. “faithfully married people are the most sexually satisfied of any sexually active group.” Glenn Stanton, *Why Marriage Matters* (Colorado Springs: Pifton Press, 1997), 42, 46.

The Scientific View

Researchers in the hard sciences such as biology, genetics, and chemistry still have a long way to go in what can be said about homosexuality and its causes. The same can be said about the fields of sociology, psychology, statistics and other areas, but let's look at what scientists have found.

Cause: While it may seem intuitive to think that homosexuality has a genetic cause, no genetic link has been found. This type of research is often most effectively done with twin studies. Such studies do not confirm that genetics is the sole cause of homosexuality.²

Of course if there was a genetic predisposition, this would not disqualify homosexuality from being a sin or validate homosexual behavior just like alcoholism or promiscuity or **gambling** or violence doesn't alleviate the need to avoid that temptation.

An interesting study was done with adoptees. They looked at males that were adopted by a family and ended up years later to be homosexual. If there was a genetic cause to homosexuality, the siblings of that adoptee would not be any more likely to be homosexual than the 2-3% that studies indicate. What they found was that 11% of the siblings were homosexual. This is a clear indication that the environment (maybe the family relations or some other factors) were the cause of the homosexuality.³

Also, if there was a genetic cause people wouldn't change back to a heterosexual perspective as often as they do. Youth revert back over 50% of the time by their mid 20s.

The medical consensus regarding male homosexuality is that there is "**no substantial hormonal differences** between **homosexuals** and their comparable **heterosexual** peers."⁴

² Allan Drew, "Genes and Human Behavior: The Emerging Paradigm," *Zygon* 32 (March 1997): 44; Udo Schuklenk, Edward K. Stein, et al, "The Ethics of Genetics Research on Sexual Orientation," *Hast Center Rep* 27 (July 1997): 6; and Jones and Yarhouse, "Science and the Ecclesiastical Homosexuality Debates," 453.

³ John and Paul Feinberg, *Ethics for a Brave New World*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 377.

⁴ Jones and Yarhouse, "Science and the Ecclesiastical Homosexuality Debates," 463. Jones and Yarhouse support these claims by reference to L. G. Gooreen, "An Appraisal of Endocrine Theories of homosexuality and Gender Dysphoria," in J.M.A. Sitsen, ed., *Handbook of Sexology, Volume VI: The Pharmacology and Endocrinology of Sexual Function* (New York: Elsevier, 1988); W. Byne and B. Parsons, "Human Sexual Orientation: The Biologic Theories Reappraised," *Archives of General Psychiatry* 50 (1993): 230 R. Green, "The Immutability of (homo)Sexual Orientation: Behavioural Science Implications for a Constitutional (Legal) Analysis," *The Journal of Psychiatry and Law* 16 (1988): 543-545; and W. Ricketts, "Biological Research on Homosexuality: Ansel's Cow or Occam's Razor?" *Journal of Homosexuality* 9 (1984): 71-76.

Researchers generally agree that “it is unlikely that sex hormone levels have any direct bearing on sexual orientation in adults.”⁵

Effects: NIH: The odds of substance use for LGB youth were, on average, 190% higher.⁶

The levels of suicide among homosexual, bisexual, and transgender is 300% higher.⁷

320,000 to 400,000: A conservative estimate of the number of gay and transgender youth facing homelessness each year. 20-40% of the homeless youth population.⁸

Almost every health related problem is higher, everything from being overweight⁹ to alcoholism to depression. Domestic abuse is much higher and occurs in 25%-75% of same sex couples.¹⁰ Even lifespan, according to the NIH, may be shortened by 20-30 years.¹¹

Some Philosophical Points

You may remember that when we looked at the topic of abortion, those who would support abortion usually went the wrong direction when they separated what it meant to be human with what it meant to be a person.

In a similar way proponents of homosexuality separate a person’s biology from the person’s gender. It is a lower view of the body that says that your biology doesn’t inform your gender.

Freedom to love who we want - You’ve likely heard someone make the assertion that “We should have the freedom to love who we want.”

This implies that the freedoms of a homosexual couple are being inhibited. In fact they’re not. They have the freedom to have property together, live together, inherit together, have sex, and spend their lives together.

⁵ Jones and Yarhouse, “*Science and the Ecclesiastical Homosexuality Debates*,” 464. They cite as sources B.A. Gladue, “*Hormones in Relationship to Homosexual/Bisexual/Heterosexual Gender Orientation*,” in Sitsen, ed., *Handbook of Sexology*, vol. 6, 393.

⁶ National Institute of Health, *Sexual orientation and adolescent substance use: a meta-analysis and methodological review*, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2680081/, accessed 12/4/2018.

⁷ NIH, *Journal of Homosexuality, Suicide and Suicide Risk in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Populations: Review and Recommendations*, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3662085/, accessed 12/4/2018.

⁸ *Gay and Transgender Youth Homelessness by the Numbers*, www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/news/2010/06/21/7980/gay-and-transgender-youth-homelessness-by-the-numbers/, accessed 12/4/2018.

⁹ NIH, *Weight Status and Sexual Orientation: Differences by Age and Within Racial and Ethnic Subgroups*, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3910028/, accessed 12/4/2018.

¹⁰ news.northwestern.edu/stories/2014/09/domestic-violence-likely-more-frequent-for-same-sex-couples, *Domestic Violence Likely More Frequent for Same-Sex Couples*, accessed 12/5/2018

¹¹ NIH, *Does homosexual activity shorten life?*, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/9923159, accessed 12/4/2018.

Same gender sexual relationships are not satisfying in the long term. Studies have shown that people who are happiest sexually are actually married, conservative Christians.¹²

Pathways to Homosexuality/Developmental Causes

- We must remember there is a significant sin component. Original sin & moral sin.
- We're not blaming parents, but acknowledging they have a significant role as we'll see.

3 Stages of the Most Common Pathway (for American boys/men) Toward Homosexuality

- As I talk about the 3 stages, I want you to realize the key concept that we're attracted to the opposite of our **subconscious gender identity**. So if I see myself subconsciously as a male, I'm going to be attracted to females. A heterosexual would have a gender identity that matches with their clear physical gender at birth.
- **1st Stage** - Boys and girls initially have a natural connection with mom. At this stage the child is very dependant and connected to the mother.
- **2nd Stage** - Between 3 and 5 the boy realizes that the world is made up of male and females and he's got to decide which one he identifies with and belongs to. A boy will begin to identify with the dad. He will realize that as attached as he is to his mom, there is a special alignment he has with his dad. This will naturally happen as long as the son is getting attention, affirmation, and affection. There's some truth to the saying that you may have heard "Fathers, hug your sons. If you don't someday another man will."
 - Of course, at this second stage, sexuality is still not an issue.
- **3rd Stage** - The 3rd stage begins to occur as the boys hormone levels begin to increase as he enters puberty. All of the sudden, the same girls that were annoying just a few years ago become very interesting, mysterious, and attractive.
- These are the 3 normal stages of gender-identity development.
- Possible Barriers to proper gender-identity development: Abuse or molestation → defensive detachment
 - Father: emotionally disconnected
 - Boy can interpret distance as rejection
 - Mother can develop 'special bond' with son (a type of overcompensation)
 - This causes boy to fail to 'disidentify' with his mom.
 - Mother: dominant, controlling

¹² Slattery and Gresh, *Pulling Back the Shades*, 99-100. "faithfully married people are the most sexually satisfied of any sexually active group." Glenn Stanton, *Why Marriage Matters* (Colorado Springs: Pifton Press, 1997), 42, 46.

- Son: All males fall on a broad spectrum of character traits. Those that are **artistic, sensitive** have a slightly higher propensity to not make the gender identity connections that would lead to a male gender identity.
- Another possible barrier is: Poor parental communication
- One last dynamic I'll mention is the overcompensation that a mother can unknowingly do to compensate for her perceived insensitivity or distance between the father and the son.

It all Starts to Makes Sense

We begin to see the 'explanatory scope' of this explanation of the gender-identity development problem perspective. For example:

- Effeminate mannerisms make sense if that male is gender-identifying with girls and women and has spent 10+ years looking to girls for behavioural cues.
- When you see the commonality among male homosexuals with having poor relationships with their fathers or one of the other situations that short-circuited their proper gender-identity development, it begins to make sense.
- Many homosexuals think it's genetic because they feel like they've always been that way and we realize that the transition that was supposed to happen around 3 years old didn't happen properly, that's the totality of your memory so you're going to think it's just genetic and just a part of who you are when it's really not.
- The promiscuity that is so common among homosexuals makes a lot of sense based on the gender-identity development disruption that often occurs. If Bob develops a female gender-identity and is attracted to Tom who is also homosexual, they both are looking for and attracted to male characteristics, but they've each got a partner with a female gender-identity so they're going to tend to feel unsatisfied and move on to another relationships. Long term monogamy among homosexuals is extremely rare.
- So the explanatory power of this common pathway is very strong. There are several other homosexual traits that make sense given this route for males to have a female gender identity. But remember, this is just the most common path.

3 Common Pathways for Girls/Women Toward Homosexuality

Girls have a similar developmental path early on, and then have some distinct differences. They would normally continue to identify with their mother and not their father unless something interferes with the developmental process.

- **1. Second child causing postpartum depression can cause 1st child to turn to their father for attention/affirmation.** If that girl identifies with her dad more than her mother (and perceives a broken relationship with her mother), and if we're drawn to the opposite sex from who we identify as, the girl may later be drawn to the opposite (in this case female) gender.
- **2. Girl decides being female is unsafe or undesirable.**
 - Sexual abuse - Some young women see a weakness in having been abused and associate that with females and subconsciously disidentify with femininity.
 - Many prominent lesbians have confirmed this route to lesbianism.
- **3. Group Think/The Bandwagon Effect** - There is a phenomenon that goes on in which females who have a circle of female friends that are into lesbianism have the tendency to themselves be drawn into lesbianism when they otherwise would not. Later they usually revert back to heterosexuality.
- **4. The 4th pathway for women into lesbianism is, what is sometimes called, 'lesbianism later in life'.** In this scenario, there is often a deep emotional connection or enmeshment that happens between women, often after one of them divorces in which the close emotional connection becomes an unhealthy relationship.

The Church's Response

- The Church as a whole has to have a compassionate response to those that have fallen victim to the many attempts to redefine marriage or gender.
- Unfortunately all too many churches have gone too far to one end of the spectrum or the other. They need to differentiate between the person and the sin and not reject the person struggling with homosexuality and instead of come alongside them.
- People are influenceable and we shouldn't be surprised that some fall victim to the latest craze to disconnect your gender-identity from you biological gender. There is a spiritual battle going on.
- In the same way that the Church needs to be compassionate toward those individuals, we as individuals that make up the Church do as well. We don't need to condone sin, but attempt to come alongside those that are in this struggle. Part of coming alongside is being there, involved in their lives. Also, part of a compassionate response is taking the time to learn about their journey, but also what you're doing tonight; Taking the time to learn about some of the aspects of what homosexuality

and gender identity are about are important. We all will likely cross paths with a homosexual that would be very interested in hearing some of the things we've talked about. It's crucial that we're equipped to do that.

PIP (Put Into Practice)

Give a 30-60 second response. Remember to **validate** and **relate** on the front end if you can.

- 1. I wish people would quit trying to change my friend Lee, homosexuals don't just change to heterosexuals.**
- 2. Both Mike and his brother Jim are homosexuals, so there's obviously a genetic cause.**
- 3. I don't know why people give my brother such a hard time about his homosexuality, he was just born that way.**
- 4. If she feels like a male, we should just treat her like a male. Let her be happy.**

Marriage

- Marriage is one of two things - either it is a **particular** thing, that has a natural purpose, that can't be redefined by society, or ...its simply a social construct. Governments don't create marriages so it's not legitimate for them to try to redefine them.

- You've likely heard it said: "Homosexuals are denied the same rights as heterosexuals." This may seem like an obvious truth, but there is an important nuance to be recognized. Homosexuals have never been denied the right to marriage.
- To the government, sexual preferences aren't the issue in marriage, gender is.
- The prohibition historically has been not against a gay person being married, but against any person gay or straight or republican or democrat or a Cowboys fan or a Saints fan 'marrying someone of the same gender', because that is not the definition or purpose of marriage as we'll see.
- The state shouldn't adjust the definition of marriage, but as soon as it does, don't expect it to stop. If we call a union with a same-gender person marriage, why not two people(polygamy, polyandry), etc.
- Marriage is the long-term commitment of a man and a woman and has a unique and vital part it plays in culture and the furtherance of any civilization.
- Governments don't create or define marriage, they recognize or describe marriage.

- It's not about restricted freedom. No personal liberty is being denied to a homosexual. It's more about the LGBT community trying to force legitimacy on something that is not normal in the natural world.
- Civil laws recognizing same sex marriage or polygamy or incestual marriage or marriage to your dog doesn't make it legitimate in other people's eyes.
- The tax benefits of marriage fit its particular purpose in raising children. These tax benefits help with the financial burden children are on household incomes.

Summary/wrap up - So, we've looked at this big/sensitive issue that is continuing to grow. We've seen that research shows that the main cause is not genetics, or hormones. We've seen that it's a dangerous lifestyle that NIH says is detrimental in so many ways that it reduces lifespan by over 20 years.

We've looked at some of the developmental causes that are somewhat different in males and females. And we've also acknowledged that the interactions that surround this topic are great opportunities for us as individuals and the church as a whole to respond in a compassionate way.

RMR (Rubber Meets the Road)

Find a friend or a family member to ask the following questions:

1. It seems like homosexuality is really on the forefront in the news more in the last 10 years than it used to be, what do you think are some of the biggest factors or causes of homosexuality?
 2. If you had to make an estimate, what would you say is the percentage of Americans that you think would identify as exclusively homosexual?
- See what directions these two questions lead your conversation. Look for opportunities to point out that you think it's interesting that you learned that studies have shown that the majority of homosexual youth returned to being heterosexual by their mid 20s.